



Town of Montague
Department, Board, Committee, Commission
BUDGET NARRATIVE

FY 24

Complete this form electronically! Be clear and concise!

Department: Libraries Submitted by: Caitlin Kelley

1. Please describe and provide the rationale for any notable changes in your FY24 budget request.

Over the course of the Montague Public Libraries strategic planning process, the public expressed over and over that the Carnegie Library's open hours are overly complicated and insufficient to meet the needs of the community. The Libraries' FY24 budget responds to that feedback by increasing and simplifying the Carnegie's open hours. This budget also seeks to make clearer the number of substitute hours used for staff coverage, pulls the Library of Things materials from the media line, and reflects the increase in fuel costs. The increase in costs is 8.09% over FY23. \$14,540 or over one third of the overall increase in the FY24 budget is due to step increases and COLAs.

- A. The most notable change is an increase in part-time and substitute wages to reflect additional open hours at the Carnegie Library. The library is currently open: Monday and Tuesday 1:00-8:00, Wednesday 10:00-8:00, Thursday and Friday 1:00-5:00, and Saturday 10:00-2:00. This budget aims to expand and simplify the schedule to: Monday thru Wednesday 10:00 to 7:00, Thursday thru Saturday 10:00 to 5:00. The library will be open nine extra hours per week and require an additional 14.5 hours of staff coverage. The increase would add a 13 hour per week part-time position and create a 6-hour position for Saturdays covered by staff rotation. (Please note that the staff member who had previously covered 4.5 hours each Saturday will be dropping that shift). The additional Saturday open hours will allow for more weekend children's programming, which was also requested through the libraries' survey. The additional part-time and substitute wages for the new hours comes out to \$12,036 per year or a 2.4% overall increase.
- B. Next, this budget separates wages for substitute librarians from the part-time wages line. In previous years the budget reflected part-time staff members' regular annual wage, plus 20 to 50 additional hours. Those hours generally paid for substitute coverage of that staff member's sick or vacation hours as well as occasional extra work hours. This method failed to account for the amount of substitute coverage needed last year, leading to a \$4,600 deficit.

For this budget, I instead provide most part-time staff members with an additional 15 hours per year for staff meetings and occasional trainings. The children's programming assistant was given an additional 50 hours per year for programming and outreach and one library assistant received an additional 20 hours to help with training new hires. Removing all of the other previously allocated extra hours from the part-time wages line led to a reduction of that line by \$2,291.

Based on best practices and feedback from other library directors, this budget calculates the number of substitute hours needed by using the following formula: vacation time + personal time + 1/2 sick time multiplied by the percentage of hours that each employee spends on-desk. With COVID, RSV, and the flu circulating through the public, assuming that staff will use a portion of the sick time allotted them through their union

contract seems prudent. The cost of substitute hours using the above formula, assuming increased hours at the Carnegie Library, is \$8,295.00 per year or a 1.5% overall increase.

- C. A small change is the creation of a line for items purchased for each branch's Library of Things. I had previously used the media line for those expenditures, but wanted to keep better track of how much is spent on different types of materials. With a comparable decrease in the media line, there is no increase in cost.
- D. Finally, an increase of 25% for fuel costs was added for FY23. An additional rate increases for both electricity and oil are reflected in the FY24 budget, per TAS' recommendation. The increase for these combined lines is \$5,900.00 or a 1.2% increase to the overall budget.

2. To this point in FY23, have you enhanced or expanded the programs and services you provide, or implemented new tools or technology that you'd like the Finance Committee and Selectboard to know about? Please describe.

Starting in July, all three libraries acted as cooling centers on days that approached or reached 90 degrees. All three locations provided bottled water and air conditioning.

In September, Angela and I released the libraries' first monthly newsletter, which highlights all the programs coming up over the course of the month as well as information about new services and library happenings. This newsletter is distributed online, through social media and the libraries' website, and in print, through the schools and all three library locations.

275 people attended programs in the canal series, monthly art receptions and author events at Montague Center reliably garner 25-40 participants each, and children's grab and go STEAM kits continue to be super-popular at all three libraries.

In October, the food pantry at the Millers Falls Branch was expanded. The branch librarian at Millers and I are collaborating with Montague Catholic Social Ministries to provide a bag of fresh groceries each to 10 Millers families each month November thru April. This service is grant-funded for 6 months and there are opportunities for additional funding and expansion, should this first pilot be a success.

The Libraries' new 5-year Strategic Plan and 2023 Action Plan were submitted to the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners in November.

3. Are there presently challenges to your department's ability to meet its goals and requirements due to its FY23 operating budget? If so, offer any your recommendations you may have for improving the situation in FY24.

Our budget is not presently facing any challenges.

4. Did you receive funding for any special articles in FY22 or FY23? Please list them and share the current status of those expenditures/projects.

The Libraries received funding for masonry repair at the Montague Center Branch and a renovation of the basement of the Carnegie Library. Both projects are waiting for biddable specs to be completed, but will be put out to bid as soon as possible.